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### **Michael Moore responds to the wacko attackos: How to Deal with the Lies and the Lying Liars When They Lie about Bowling for Columbine**

*by Michael Moore*

One thing you get used to when you're in what's called "the public eye" is reading the humorous fiction that others like to write about you. For instance, I have read in quite respectable and trustworthy publications that (a) I'm a college graduate (I'm not), (b) I was a factory worker (I quit the first day), and (c) I have two brothers (I have none). Newsweek wrote that I live in a penthouse on Central Park West (I live above a Baby Gap store, and not on any park), and the Internet Movie Database once listed me as the director of the Elvis movie, Blue Hawaii. (I was six-years-old at the time the film was made, but I was quite skilled in directing my sisters in building me a snowman). Lately, my favorite mistake is the one many reviewers made crediting the cartoon in Bowling for Columbine as being the work of the South Park creators. It isn't. I wrote it and my buddy Harold Moss's animation studio drew it.

I've enjoyed reading these inventions/mistakes about this "Michael Moore." I mean, who *wouldn't* want to fantasize about living in penthouses roughhousing with brothers you never had. But lately I've begun to see so many things about me or my work that aren't true. It's become so easy to spread these fictions through the internet (thanks mostly to lazy reporters or web junkies who do all their research by typing in "key words" and then just repeat the same mistakes). And so I wonder that if I don't correct the record, then all of the people who don't know better may just end up being filled with a bunch of stuff that isn't true.

Of course, it would take a lot of my time to contact all these sites and media outlets to correct their errors and I think it's more important I spend my time on my next book or movie so I just let it ride. But is that fair to you, the reader, who has now been told something that isn't true?

With the unexpected and overwhelming success of Bowling for Columbine and Stupid White Men, the fiction that has been written or spoken about me and my work has reached a whole new level of storytelling. It's no longer about making some simple errors or calling me *Roger Moore*. It is now about organized groups going full blast trying to discredit me by knowingly making up lies and repeating them over and over in the hopes that people will believe them—and, then, stop listening to me.

Oh, that it would be so easy!

Fortunately, they are so wound up in their anger and hatred that they have ended up discrediting themselves.

Look, I accept the fact that, if I go after the Thief-in-Chief – and more people buy my book than any other nonfiction book last year—then that is naturally going to send a few of his henchmen after me. Fine. That's okay. I knew that before I got into this and I ain't whining about it now.

I also realize that you just don't go after the NRA and its supporters and then not expect them to come back at you with both barrels (so to speak). These are not nice people and they don't play nice—that's how they got to be so powerful.

So, a whole host of gun lobby groups and individual gun nuts have put up websites where the smears on me range from the pre-adolescent (I'm a "crapweasel" and a "fat f---ing piece of s--t) to Orwellian-style venom ("Michael Moore hates America!").

I have mostly ignored this silliness. But a few weeks ago, this lunatic crap hit the mainstream fan. CNN actually put some guy on a show saying that my film contains "so many falsehoods, one after the other, after the other, after the other." They introduced him as a "critic" and "research director" of the "Independence Institute." He seemed mighty impressive.

Except they failed to tell their viewers who he *really* was: a contributing editor of Gun Week Magazine.

CNN saw no need to inform the viewers that their "expert" (who has made a career out of opposing any form of gun control) has a vested interest in convincing the public that Bowling for Columbine is a horribly rotten movie.

So, what do you do when the nutcases succeed in getting on CNN? Do you just keep ignoring them? How do you handle people who say the Holocaust never happened or that monkeys fly? Ignore them and they'll go away? If you give them any attention, *all* the nuts will come out of the woodwork.

And that's what happened. I saw another one of these lunatics, this time on MSNBC. A guy named John Lofton. He went on and on about how my movie is all made up. The anchor on MSNBC never challenged him on his lies and never told the viewers who he really was—a right wing crazy who believes Bush is too liberal. He was once an advisor to Pat Buchanan's Presidential campaign, and was a direct-mail writer for Jesse Helms. Writing in opposition to Hate Crime bills in the conservative Washington Times (where he was a columnist from 1983 to 1989), Lofton explained:

*Take, for example, this business of so-called “anti-gay violence.” This bill will be used to go after only those who commit crimes against people because they are homosexuals. But this is not the most pernicious form of “anti-gay violence.” Not by a long shot. The most violent — indeed fatal 100-percent of the time — form of “anti-gay violence” has been committed not by so-called “homophobes” who bash homosexuals, but by male homosexuals and bisexuals against other male bisexuals and homosexuals. To date, tens of thousands of male bisexual and homosexual men are dead in our country because of AIDS, because they engaged in high-risk homosexual sex.*

*Is this not “anti-gay violence” which numbers its victims far beyond anything any “homophobes” have done?*

Well, I figured I better deal with this because the nutters were now being turned into “respectable critics” by a media that either had an agenda or were just plain lazy. So, how crazy are the things they’ve said about Bowling for Columbine? Here are my favorites:

*“That scene where you got the gun in the bank was staged!”*

Well of course it was staged! It’s a movie! We built the “bank” as a set and then I hired actors to play the bank tellers and the manager and we got a toy gun from the prop department and then I wrote some really cool dialogue for me and them to say! Pretty neat, huh?

Or...

**The Truth:** In the spring of 2001, I saw a real ad in a real newspaper in Michigan announcing a real promotion that this real bank had where they would give you a gun (as your up-front interest) for opening up a Certificate of Deposit account. They promoted this in publications all over the country: “More Bang for Your Buck!” There was news coverage of this bank giving away guns, long before I even shot the scene there. The Chicago Sun Times wrote about how the bank would “hand you a gun” with the purchase of a CD. Those are the precise words used by a bank employee in the film.

When you see me going in to the bank and walking out with my new gun in Bowling for Columbine, that is *exactly* as it happened. Nothing was done out of the ordinary other than to phone ahead and ask permission to let me bring a camera in to film me opening up my account. I walked into that bank in northern Michigan for the first time ever on that day in June 2001, and, with cameras rolling, gave the bank teller \$1,000 and opened up a 20-year CD account. After you see me filling out the required federal forms (“How do you spell Caucasian?”)—which I am filling out here for the first time—the bank manager faxed it to the bank’s main office for them to do the background check. The bank is a licensed federal arms dealer and thus can have guns on

the premises and do the instant background checks (the ATF's Federal Firearms database, which includes all federally approved gun dealers, lists North Country Bank with Federal Firearms License #4-38-153-01-5C-39922).

Within 10 minutes, the "OK" came through from the firearms background check agency and, five minutes later, just as you see it in the film, they handed me a Weatherby Mark V Magnum rifle. And it is that very gun that I still own to this day. I have decided the best thing to do with this gun is to melt it down into a bust of John Ashcroft and auction it off on E-Bay (more details on that later). All the proceeds will go to The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence to fight all these lying gun nuts who attack my film and make it possible on a daily basis for America's gun epidemic to rage on.

Here's another whopper I've had to listen to from the pro-gun groups:

*"The Lockheed factory in Littleton, Colorado, has nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction!"*

That's right! That big honkin' rocket sitting behind the Lockheed spokesman in Bowling for Columbine—the one with "US AIRFORCE" written on it in BIG ASS letters—well, I admit it: I snuck in and painted that on that Titan IV rocket when Lockheed wasn't looking! After all, those rockets were only being used for the Weather Channel! Ha-Ha-Ha! I sure fooled everyone!!

Or....

**The Truth:** Lockheed Martin is the largest weapons-maker in the world. The Littleton facility has been manufacturing missiles, missile components, and other weapons systems for almost half a century. In the 1950s, workers at the Littleton facility constructed the first Titan intercontinental ballistic missile, designed to unleash a nuclear warhead on the Soviet Union; in the mid-1980s, they were partially assembling MX missiles, instruments for the Minuteman ICBM, a space laser weapon called Zenith Star, and a Star Wars program known as Brilliant Pebbles.

In the full, unedited interview I did with the Lockheed spokesman, he told me that Lockheed started building nuclear missiles in Littleton and "played a role in the development of Peacekeeper MX Missiles." As for what's currently manufactured in Littleton, McCollum told me, "[The rockets sitting behind me] carry mainly very large national security satellites—some we can't talk about."

Since that interview, the Titan IV rockets manufactured in Littleton have been critical to the war effort in both Afghanistan and Iraq. These rockets launched advanced satellites that were "instrumental in providing command-and-control operations over Iraq...for the rapid targeting of Navy Tomahawk cruise missiles involved in Iraqi strikes and clandestine communications with Special Operations Forces." That Lockheed lets the occasional weather or TV satellite hitch a ride on one of its rockets should not distract anyone from Lockheed's main mission and moneymaker in Littleton: to make

instruments that help kill people. That two of Littleton's children decided to engineer their own mass killing is what these guys and the Internet crazies don't want to discuss.

Perhaps the oddest of all the smears thrown at Bowling for Columbine is this one:

*"The film depicts NRA president Charlton Heston giving a speech near Columbine; he actually gave it a year later and 900 miles away. The speech he did give is edited to make conciliatory statements sound like rudeness."*

Um, yeah, that's right! I made it up! Heston never went there! He never said those things!

Or....

**The Truth:** Heston took his NRA show to Denver and did and said exactly what we recounted. From the end of my narration setting up Heston's speech in Denver, with my words, "a big pro-gun rally," every word out of Charlton Heston's mouth was uttered right there in Denver, just 10 days after the Columbine tragedy. But don't take my word; read the transcript of his whole speech. Heston devotes the entire speech to challenging the Denver mayor and mocking the mayor's pleas that the NRA "don't come here." Far from deliberately editing the film to make Heston look worse, I chose to leave most of this out and not make Heston look as evil as he actually was.

Why are these gun nuts upset that their brave NRA leader's words are in my film? You'd think they would be proud of the things he said... except, when intercut with the words of a grieving father (whose son died at Columbine and happened to be speaking in a protest that same weekend Heston was at the convention center). Suddenly, Charlton Heston doesn't look so good does he? Especially to the people of Denver (and, the following year, to the people of Flint) who were still in shock over the tragedies when Heston showed up.

As for the clip preceding the Denver speech, when Heston proclaims "from my cold dead hands," this appears as Heston is being introduced in narration. It is Heston's most well-recognized NRA image: hoisting the rifle overhead as he makes his proclamation, as he has done at virtually every political appearance on behalf of the NRA (before and since Columbine). I have merely re-broadcast an image supplied to us by a Denver TV station, an image which the NRA has itself crafted for the media, or, as one article put it, "the mantra of dedicated gun owners" which they "wear on T-shirts, stamp on the outside of envelopes, e-mail on the Internet and sometimes shout over the phone." Are they now embarrassed by this sick, repulsive image and the words that accompany it?

I've also been accused of making up the gun homicide counts in the United States and various countries around the world. That is, like all the rest of this stuff, a

bald-face lie. Every statistic in the film is true. They all come directly from the government. Here are the facts, right from the sources:

The U.S. figure of 11,127 gun deaths comes from a report from the Center for Disease Control. Japan's gun deaths of 39 was provided by the National Police Agency of Japan; Germany: 381 gun deaths from Bundeskriminalamt (German FBI); Canada: 165 gun deaths from Statistics Canada, the governmental statistics agency; United Kingdom: 68 gun deaths, from the Centre for Crime and Justice studies in Britain; Australia: 65 gun deaths from the Australian Institute of Criminology; France: 255 gun deaths, from the International Journal of Epidemiology.

Finally, I've even been asked about whether the two killers were at bowling class on the morning of the shootings. Well, that's what their teacher told the investigators, and that's what was corroborated by several eyewitness reports of students to the police, the FBI, and the District Attorney's office. I'll tell you who wasn't there—me! That's why in the film I pose it as a question:

*"So did Dylan and Eric show up that morning and bowl two games before moving on to shoot up the school? And did they just chuck the balls down the lane? Did this mean something?"*

Of course, it's a silly discussion, and it misses the whole, larger point: that blaming bowling for their killing spree would be as dumb as blaming Marilyn Manson. But the gun nuts don't want to discuss either specific points or larger issues because when that debate is held, they lose. Most Americans want stronger gun laws (among others, see the 2001 National Gun Policy Survey from the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center), and the gun lobbies know it. That is why it's critical to distract and alter the debate, and go after anyone who questions why we have so many gun deaths in America (especially if he does it in bestselling books and popular films).

I can guarantee to you, without equivocation, that **every fact in my movie is true**. Three teams of fact-checkers and two groups of lawyers went through it with a fine-tooth comb to make sure that every statement of fact is indeed an indisputable fact. Trust me: no film company would ever release a film like this without putting it through the most vigorous vetting process possible. The sheer power and threat of the NRA is reason enough to strike fear in any movie studio or theater chain. The NRA will go after you without mercy if they think there's half a chance of destroying you. That's why we don't have better gun laws in this country: every member of Congress is scared to death of them.

Well, guess what. Total number of lawsuits to date against me or my film by the NRA? NONE. That's right: zero. And don't forget for a second that if they could have shut this film down on a technicality they would have. But they didn't and they can't because the film is factually solid and above reproach. In fact, we have not been sued by any individual or group over the statements made in Bowling for Columbine. Why is that? Because everything we say is true, and the things that are our opinion, we say so

and leave it up to the viewer to decide if our point of view is correct or not for each of them.

So, faced with a thoroughly truthful and honest film, those who object to the film's political points are left with the choice of debating us on the issues in the film – or resorting to character assassination. They have chosen the latter. What a sad place to be.

Actually, I have found one typo in the theatrical release of the film. It was a caption that read, "Willie Horton released by Dukakis and kills again." In fact, Willie Horton was a convicted murderer who, after escaping from furlough, raped a woman and stabbed her fiancé, but didn't kill him. The caption has been permanently corrected on the DVD and home video version of the film and replaced with, "Willie Horton released. Then rapes a woman." My apologies to Willie Horton and the Horton family for implying he is a double-murderer when he is only a single-murderer and rapist. And my apologies to the late Lee Atwater who, on his deathbed, apologized for having engineered the smear campaign against Dukakis (but correctly identified Mr. Horton as a single-murderer!).

Well, there you have it. I suppose the people who tell their make-believe stories about me and my work will continue to do so. Maybe they should be sued for knowingly libeling me. Or maybe I'll just keep laughing—laughing all the way to the end of the Bush Administration (scheduled, I believe, for sometime in November of next year).

Yours,

Michael Moore  
Director, Bowling for Columbine

PS. From now on, I will deal with all wacko attackos on this page. If you hear something about me that doesn't sound quite right, check in here.